



EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE OF THE EAST DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

Project Number: 3016903

Address: 301 12th Avenue

Applicant: Blair Stone of Mithun Architects for Spectrum Development

Date of Meeting: Wednesday, April 23, 2014

Board Members Present: Natalie Gualy, Chair
Michael Austin
Curtis Bigelow
Dan Foltz
Kevin Price

Board Members Absent: Cristina Orr-Cahall

DPD Staff Present: Shelley Bolser

SITE & VICINITY

Site Zone: NC3P-65

Nearby Zones: (North) NC3P-65
(South) NC3P-65
(East) NC3P-65 and LR3
(West) MR

Lot Area: 14,183 square feet



Current Development:

The existing site includes two residential structures, originally constructed as single family residential development in the early 20th century. Surface parking is located off the alley to the west.

Surrounding Development and Neighborhood Character:

The immediate context consists of recent multi-family development to the west, early 20th century 1-story commercial to the north, the King County Youth Service Center campus to the east, and a vacant lot across the street to the south. The King County Youth Service Center is proposed for redevelopment in the near future, with new buildings, expanded services, and a pedestrian connection across the site, connecting Alder Street from 12th Ave to 14th Ave.

The overall area includes a mix of early 20th century commercial, multi-family and single family residential, with newer Midrise multi-family development to the west and some newer mixed-use residential and commercial development to the north (near Jefferson St). 12th Ave connects Capitol Hill with the International District, and serves as the dividing line between First Hill to the west and the Central District to the east. The area is served by frequent bus transit routes and will soon be served by the Streetcar, with access nearby at E. Yesler Way and at 14th Ave.

Access:

The subject property includes vehicular access from the alley at the west edge of the site and appears to have previously included a garage with access from 12th Ave.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposal is for a 6-story, 75 unit building with 2,700 sq. ft. of retail at grade and 20 parking spaces located within the structure. The existing structures would be demolished.

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The packet includes materials presented at the meeting, and is available online by entering the project number (3016903) at this website:

http://www.seattle.gov/dpd/Planning/Design_Review_Program/Project_Reviews/Reports/default.asp.

The packet is also available to view in the file, by contacting the Public Resource Center at DPD:

Mailing Public Resource Center

Address: 700 Fifth Ave., Suite 2000
P.O. Box 34019
Seattle, WA 98124-4019

Email: PRC@seattle.gov

DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development is part of a coordinated effort with two other nearby sites. The three sites will include apartments affordable to “workforce housing” levels of income and will include some shared amenities between the three buildings. The other two sites are located one block to the west (11th and E. Alder St), and three blocks to the south (12th and E. Yesler Way).

The proposed development includes a focus on bicycle use, with two entries for cyclists and a dedicated bicycle storage/maintenance room at E. Alder St). The preferred option includes a residential entry at the southeast corner, and an 18-20’ tall “open hall” retail concept with the intent to have a shared open floor area serving retail/restaurant uses and residential lobby uses. The upper floors include modulation at the west property line with a second floor terrace divided into individual residential unit open spaces, and shared residential open space at the roof level. A narrow slot of modulation would be provided at the south façade.

The applicant noted that Alder Street is steeply sloped at this location and the south street level design will be a challenge. The windows to the south residential lobby space would relate to the sidewalk grade near the east edge of the site. The 2nd story bike storage/repair station would include windows to relate to the sidewalk grade near the west edge of the site. Landscaped planters are proposed at the building edge to soften the transition and complement the landscape strip on the south edge of the sidewalk.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments offered at the meeting included the following:

- Appreciated that the applicant has met with the 12th Avenue neighborhood group to discuss the design, and encouraged the applicant to continue communication.
- Clarified that the King County Youth Services Center redevelopment is quite a few years away at this point. King County is trying to work with the neighborhood on the design development of the site.
- The retail should be designed to be dramatic and appealing. This will be a difficult area for retail to be successful and the design should include something special to attract businesses and patrons to the site.
- Supported the proposed design concept.

PRIORITIES & BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

After visiting the site, considering the analysis of the site and context provided by the proponents, and hearing public comment, the Design Review Board members provided the following siting and design guidance.

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- 1. Massing Alternatives.** The majority of the Board supported the preferred massing alternative.
 - a. The Board strongly supported the proposed height of the retail space, which engages the pedestrian realm on 12th Ave and creates a proportional scale with the upper building mass. (CS2.A, CS2.B)
 - b. The Board supported the consistent street wall on 12th Ave. (CS2.B)
 - c. The Board noted benefits and challenges of the massing response at Alder Street.
 - i. Two Board members noted that Alder Street could include better modulation to relate to nearby context. (CS2.C, CS2.D)
 - ii. Three Board members noted that the narrow modulation and consistent street wall enhances the corner and responds well to nearby massing context. (CS2.C, CS2.D)
- 2. Design Concept.** The Board recommended that the design should strive to set an example for future development in the area. (CS3.A)
 - a. The Board supported the conceptual design graphics showing an emphasis on verticality and framed openings, even if the musical theme of framed windows as “notes” in the horizontally expressed upper level facade “staff” isn’t overly evident in the conceptual graphics. (DC2.B, DC2.C, DC2.D, DC2.E)
 - b. The Board recommended that the proposed palette of cementitious siding and concrete base is acceptable, but the application of materials should be thoughtfully detailed and enhance the design concept. (DC4.A)
 - c. The Board suggested reusing the materials in the existing residential buildings on the site, with the intent of expressing the history of the area. (CS3.B)
 - d. The elevator/stair towers at the roof should be integrated into the overall design. (DC2.B)
- 3. Alder Street level façade.** The Alder Street façade response to the grade change will be a challenge. The design should locate uses and transparency to maximize activation of the sidewalk at the Alder Street façade. (CS1.C, PL1.B)
 - a. The Board suggested the gym and residential lobby uses could be flipped, allowing human activity to be visible at the street edge and residential lobby to complement the shared retail hall use near the north end of the site. (DC1.A)
 - b. The bike storage/repair space should be designed to encourage human activity and visual interest. The Board noted that the room should include creative visual bicycle themes and large amounts of transparency, in order to provide visual interest at the sidewalk. (PL1.B, PL2.B, PL4.B)
 - c. The Board recommended that the overall bicycle design theme should be maximized at the street level spaces (Alder and 12th Ave). (CS3.B, PL4.B)
- 4. Landscape Plan.** The Board supported the south-facing shared rooftop deck and recommended that the street level landscaping enhance the Alder Street pedestrian environment. (PL1.B, DC3.A, DC4.D)

- a. The design of the rooftop deck should maximize usable space for residents, since this is the primary shared outdoor amenity space. (DC3.A)
- b. The landscape plan should respond to the sloped Alder Street frontage and enhance the pedestrian experience at that edge. Low plants should be used between the sidewalk and building, in order to enhance human activation of street level uses. (PL1.B, DC4.D)

DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES

The priority Citywide and Neighborhood guidelines are summarized below. For the full text please visit the [Design Review website](#).

CONTEXT & SITE

CS1 Natural Systems and Site Features: Use natural systems/features of the site and its surroundings as a starting point for project design.

CS1-C Topography

CS1-C-1. Land Form: Use natural topography and desirable landforms to inform project design.

CS1-C-2. Elevation Changes: Use the existing site topography when locating structures and open spaces on the site.

CS2 Urban Pattern and Form: Strengthen the most desirable forms, characteristics, and patterns of the streets, block faces, and open spaces in the surrounding area.

CS2-A Location in the City and Neighborhood

CS2-A-1. Sense of Place: Emphasize attributes that give a distinctive sense of place. Design the building and open spaces to enhance areas where a strong identity already exists, and create a sense of place where the physical context is less established.

CS2-A-2. Architectural Presence: Evaluate the degree of visibility or architectural presence that is appropriate or desired given the context, and design accordingly.

CS2-B Adjacent Sites, Streets, and Open Spaces

CS2-B-1. Site Characteristics: Allow characteristics of sites to inform the design, especially where the street grid and topography create unusually shaped lots that can add distinction to the building massing.

CS2-B-2. Connection to the Street: Identify opportunities for the project to make a strong connection to the street and public realm.

CS2-B-3. Character of Open Space: Contribute to the character and proportion of surrounding open spaces.

CS2-C Relationship to the Block

CS2-C-1. Corner Sites: Corner sites can serve as gateways or focal points; both require careful detailing at the first three floors due to their high visibility from two or more streets and long distances.

CS2-C-2. Mid-Block Sites: Look to the uses and scales of adjacent buildings for clues about how to design a mid-block building. Continue a strong street-edge and respond to datum lines of adjacent buildings at the first three floors.

CS2-C-3. Full Block Sites: Break up long facades of full-block buildings to avoid a monolithic presence. Provide detail and human scale at street-level, and include repeating elements to add variety and rhythm to the façade and overall building design.

CS2-D Height, Bulk, and Scale

CS2-D-1. Existing Development and Zoning: Review the height, bulk, and scale of neighboring buildings as well as the scale of development anticipated by zoning for the area to determine an appropriate complement and/or transition.

CS2-D-2. Existing Site Features: Use changes in topography, site shape, and vegetation or structures to help make a successful fit with adjacent properties.

CS2-D-3. Zone Transitions: For projects located at the edge of different zones, provide an appropriate transition or complement to the adjacent zone(s). Projects should create a step in perceived height, bulk and scale between the anticipated development potential of the adjacent zone and the proposed development.

CS2-D-4. Massing Choices: Strive for a successful transition between zones where a project abuts a less intense zone.

CS2-D-5. Respect for Adjacent Sites: Respect adjacent properties with design and site planning to minimize disrupting the privacy of residents in adjacent buildings.

CS3 Architectural Context and Character: Contribute to the architectural character of the neighborhood.

CS3-A Emphasizing Positive Neighborhood Attributes

CS3-A-4. Evolving Neighborhoods: In neighborhoods where architectural character is evolving or otherwise in transition, explore ways for new development to establish a positive and desirable context for others to build upon in the future.

CS3-B Local History and Culture

CS3-B-1. Placemaking: Explore the history of the site and neighborhood as a potential placemaking opportunity. Look for historical and cultural significance, using neighborhood groups and archives as resources.

CS3-B-2. Historical/Cultural References: Reuse existing structures on the site where feasible as a means of incorporating historical or cultural elements into the new project.

PUBLIC LIFE

PL1 Connectivity: Complement and contribute to the network of open spaces around the site and the connections among them.

PL1-B Walkways and Connections

PL1-B-1. Pedestrian Infrastructure: Connect on-site pedestrian walkways with existing public and private pedestrian infrastructure, thereby supporting pedestrian connections within and outside the project.

PL1-B-2. Pedestrian Volumes: Provide ample space for pedestrian flow and circulation, particularly in areas where there is already heavy pedestrian traffic or where the project is expected to add or attract pedestrians to the area.

PL1-B-3. Pedestrian Amenities: Opportunities for creating lively, pedestrian oriented open spaces to enliven the area and attract interest and interaction with the site and building should be considered.

PL2 Walkability: Create a safe and comfortable walking environment that is easy to navigate and well-connected to existing pedestrian walkways and features.

PL2-B Safety and Security

PL2-B-1. Eyes on the Street: Create a safe environment by providing lines of sight and encouraging natural surveillance.

PL2-B-2. Lighting for Safety: Provide lighting at sufficient lumen intensities and scales, including pathway illumination, pedestrian and entry lighting, and/or security lights.

PL2-B-3. Street-Level Transparency: Ensure transparency of street-level uses (for uses such as nonresidential uses or residential lobbies), where appropriate, by keeping views open into spaces behind walls or plantings, at corners, or along narrow passageways.

PL4 Active Transportation: Incorporate design features that facilitate active forms of transportation such as walking, bicycling, and use of transit.

PL4-B Planning Ahead for Bicyclists

PL4-B-1. Early Planning: Consider existing and future bicycle traffic to and through the site early in the process so that access and connections are integrated into the project along with other modes of travel.

PL4-B-2. Bike Facilities: Facilities such as bike racks and storage, bike share stations, shower facilities and lockers for bicyclists should be located to maximize convenience, security, and safety.

PL4-B-3. Bike Connections: Facilitate connections to bicycle trails and infrastructure around and beyond the project.

DESIGN CONCEPT

DC1 Project Uses and Activities: Optimize the arrangement of uses and activities on site.

DC1-A Arrangement of Interior Uses

DC1-A-1. Visibility: Locate uses and services frequently used by the public in visible or prominent areas, such as at entries or along the street front.

DC1-A-2. Gathering Places: Maximize the use of any interior or exterior gathering spaces.

DC1-A-3. Flexibility: Build in flexibility so the building can adapt over time to evolving needs, such as the ability to change residential space to commercial space as needed.

DC1-A-4. Views and Connections: Locate interior uses and activities to take advantage of views and physical connections to exterior spaces and uses.

DC2 Architectural Concept: Develop an architectural concept that will result in a unified and functional design that fits well on the site and within its surroundings.

DC2-B Architectural and Facade Composition

DC2-B-1. Façade Composition: Design all building facades—including alleys and visible roofs— considering the composition and architectural expression of the building as a whole. Ensure that all facades are attractive and well-proportioned.

DC2-B-2. Blank Walls: Avoid large blank walls along visible façades wherever possible. Where expanses of blank walls, retaining walls, or garage facades are unavoidable, include uses or design treatments at the street level that have human scale and are designed for pedestrians.

DC2-C Secondary Architectural Features

DC2-C-1. Visual Depth and Interest: Add depth to facades where appropriate by incorporating balconies, canopies, awnings, decks, or other secondary elements into the façade design. Add detailing at the street level in order to create interest for the pedestrian and encourage active street life and window shopping (in retail areas).

DC2-C-2. Dual Purpose Elements: Consider architectural features that can be dual purpose— adding depth, texture, and scale as well as serving other project functions.

DC2-C-3. Fit With Neighboring Buildings: Use design elements to achieve a successful fit between a building and its neighbors.

DC2-D Scale and Texture

DC2-D-1. Human Scale: Incorporate architectural features, elements, and details that are of human scale into the building facades, entries, retaining walls, courtyards, and exterior spaces in a manner that is consistent with the overall architectural concept

DC2-D-2. Texture: Design the character of the building, as expressed in the form, scale, and materials, to strive for a fine-grained scale, or “texture,” particularly at the street level and other areas where pedestrians predominate.

DC2-E Form and Function

DC2-E-1. Legibility and Flexibility: Strive for a balance between building use legibility and flexibility. Design buildings such that their primary functions and uses can be readily determined from the exterior, making the building easy to access and understand. At the same time, design flexibility into the building so that it may remain useful over time even as specific programmatic needs evolve.

DC3 Open Space Concept: Integrate open space design with the building design so that they complement each other.

Beacon Hill Supplemental Guidance:

DC3-A Building-Open Space Relationship

DC3-A-1. Interior/Exterior Fit: Develop an open space concept in conjunction with the architectural concept to ensure that interior and exterior spaces relate well to each other and support the functions of the development.

DC4 Exterior Elements and Finishes: Use appropriate and high quality elements and finishes for the building and its open spaces.

DC4-A Exterior Elements and Finishes

DC4-A-1. Exterior Finish Materials: Building exteriors should be constructed of durable and maintainable materials that are attractive even when viewed up close. Materials that have texture, pattern, or lend themselves to a high quality of detailing are encouraged.

DC4-A-2. Climate Appropriateness: Select durable and attractive materials that will age well in Seattle's climate, taking special care to detail corners, edges, and transitions.

DC4-D Trees, Landscape, and Hardscape Materials

DC4-D-1. Choice of Plant Materials: Reinforce the overall architectural and open space design concepts through the selection of landscape materials.

DC4-D-2. Hardscape Materials: Use exterior courtyards, plazas, and other hard surfaced areas as an opportunity to add color, texture, and/or pattern and enliven public areas through the use of distinctive and durable paving materials. Use permeable materials wherever possible.

DC4-D-3. Long Range Planning: Select plants that upon maturity will be of appropriate size, scale, and shape to contribute to the site as intended.

DC4-D-4. Place Making: Create a landscape design that helps define spaces with significant elements such as trees.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARD DEPARTURES

No departures were identified at the Early Design Guidance meeting.

BOARD DIRECTION

At the conclusion of the EARLY DESIGN GUIDANCE meeting, the Board recommended moving forward to MUP application.